

Docket No. RID 01058Amendments to the Claims

1. (currently amended) A bale of elastomer composite comprising elastomer composite pieces, wherein the elastomer composite pieces comprise an elastomer and filler, and wherein the bale has a void volume of at least from 3% to 20%, the elastomer composite produced by a method comprising:

feeding a continuous flow of first fluid comprising elastomer latex to a mixing zone of a coagulum reactor defining an elongate coagulum zone extending from the mixing zone to a discharge end,

feeding a continuous flow of second fluid comprising particulate filler under pressure to the mixing zone of the coagulum reactor to form a mixture with the elastomer latex, the mixture passing as a continuous flow to the discharge end and the particulate filler being effective to coagulate the elastomer latex, wherein feeding of the second fluid against the first fluid within the mixing zone is sufficiently energetic to substantially completely coagulate the elastomer latex with the particulate filler prior to the discharge end, and

discharging a substantially continuous flow of elastomer masterbatch from the discharge end of the coagulum reactor,

forming the elastomer masterbatch from the discharge end of the coagulum reactor into sheets, and

cutting the sheets into planar pieces,

and wherein the elastomer composite pieces have a Mooney viscosity of at least 100.

2. (cancelled)

3. (currently amended) A bale of elastomer composite ~~in accordance with claim 1, wherein the comprising elastomer composite pieces have in~~ a generally planar form, wherein the bale has a void volume of from 3% to 20%, and wherein the elastomer composite pieces have a Mooney viscosity of at least 100, the elastomer composite pieces produced by a method comprising:

mixing an elastomer latex fluid with a filler slurry to form an elastomer composite; and treating the elastomer composite to form elastomer composite pieces.

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4. (currently amended) A bale of elastomer composite ~~in accordance with claim 1, wherein the comprising elastomer composite pieces have~~ having the form of short strips, wherein the bale has a void volume of from 3% to 20%, and wherein the elastomer composite pieces have a Mooney viscosity of at least 100, the elastomer composite pieces produced by a method comprising:

mixing an elastomer latex fluid with a filler slurry to form an elastomer composite; and
treating the elastomer composite to form elastomer composite pieces.

5. (currently amended) A bale of elastomer composite comprising elastomer composite pieces ~~wherein the elastomer composite pieces comprise an elastomer and filler,~~
wherein the bale has a void volume of ~~at least~~ from 3% to 20%, and
wherein the elastomer composite pieces have the form of short strips that are approximately 40 mm to 60 mm long, approximately 5 mm to 10 mm wide, and approximately 5 mm to 10 mm thick, and
wherein the elastomer composite pieces have a Mooney viscosity of at least 100, the elastomer composite pieces produced by a method comprising

mixing an elastomer latex fluid with a filler slurry to form an elastomer composite; and
treating the elastomer composite to form elastomer composite pieces.

6.-64. (cancelled)

65. (new) A bale of elastomer composite comprising elastomer composite pieces, wherein the elastomer composite pieces comprise an elastomer and filler, and wherein the bale has a void volume of from 3% to 20%, the elastomer composite produced by a method comprising:

feeding a continuous flow of first fluid comprising elastomer latex to a mixing zone of a coagulum reactor defining an elongate coagulum zone extending from the mixing zone to a discharge end,

feeding a continuous flow of second fluid comprising particulate filler under pressure to the mixing zone of the coagulum reactor to form a mixture with the elastomer latex, the mixture passing as a continuous flow to the discharge end and the particulate filler being effective to coagulate the elastomer latex, wherein feeding of the second fluid against the first fluid within the mixing zone is sufficiently energetic to substantially completely coagulate the elastomer latex with the particulate filler prior to the discharge end,

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discharging a substantially continuous flow of elastomer masterbatch from the discharge end of the coagulum reactor,

forming the elastomer masterbatch from the discharge end of the coagulum reactor into sheets, and

cutting the sheets into strips,

and wherein the elastomer composite pieces have a Mooney viscosity of at least 100.